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S E R M O N S.

*By the Rev. WILLIAM KEATE,*  
RECTOR OF LAVERTON, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET,

AND AUTHOR OF  
"William Bull's Address to the Steward of the Manor."

WITH A POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING

Some Strictures upon "An Address to the Opposers of the  
Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts."

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, PALL MALL.  
M.DCC.XC.

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[ Price 2s. ]

A F R E  
E X A M I N A T I O N

O F

D R P R I G E

A N D

D R P R I E S T L E Y

S E R M O N S

BY THE REV. WILLIAM KENT

RECTOR OF LAMBETH, AND THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN



WILLIAM BENTLEY, the Seward of the Stationers' Company

WITH A POSTSCRIPT

CONTAINING

Some Observations upon a late Address to the Officers of the  
Respect of the Corporation and the State

L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR J. BODLEY, FLEET STREET

MDCCLXX

[Price 2s]



TO THE RIGHT REVEREND  
C H A R L E S,  
L O R D B I S H O P  
OF BATH AND WELLS,

THIS FEEBLE ATTEMPT  
TO VINDICATE FROM THE PRESENT  
ATTACKS OF ITS ADVERSARIES,  
AND TO GUARD AGAINST THEIR  
FUTURE ASSAULTS,

OUR CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT,  
OF WHICH HIS LORDSHIP IS BOTH  
THE ORNAMENT AND PROTECTOR,

IS,

WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,  
MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED, AND

MOST GRATEFUL SERVANT,

ONE OF HIS PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

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MOST GRATEFUL SERVANT,

BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED, AND

MOST HUMBL Y INQUIRED,

WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,

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THE ORNAMENT AND PROTECTOR,

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OUR CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT,

THREE ASSAULTS,

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OF BATH AND WELLS,

L O R D B I S H O P

C H A R L E S

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE great end of the proposed Examination being fully obtained, by the defeat of the petition for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, a doubt will naturally arise of the expediency or propriety of this publication; and it will reasonably be suggested, that the subject might now be consigned to oblivion, that animosities may cease, and charity revive among us.

The interruptions that retarded the appearance of this pamphlet are of too domestic a concern to interest the reader; but the delay was also in some measure occasioned by the precipitancy of the Dissenters, in bringing forward the petition so much earlier in this than in the years preceding, either from an apprehension of a dissolution of Parliament, or with a view to obviate the effects of the

many



many counter-petitions, which they saw were pouring in from every quarter, with so many respectable names at the head of them, to oppose the repeal.

For the glorious and decisive termination of this question, all of the Established Church have great reason to be thankful; and this victory we ascribe not merely to the splendid abilities which were displayed in defence of the constitution, but more especially to the well-judged call of the House, which prevented a surprize, and produced an assembly of senators worthy to determine a question of such importance.

But the motives which still influence the author not to withhold this Examination, notwithstanding the glorious event of a cause so truly constitutional, it is hoped will, in some degree, excuse its appearance even subsequent to the determination; if it be considered, That the Dissenters throughout the kingdom have thrown out repeated menaces, that, should their petition be rejected, they will repeatedly renew their application, and that

that unwearied importunity and perseverance must finally prevail.

2dly, That many of their resolutions are fraught with very suspicious intimations, and contain, some a secret, others an avowed defiance, that if they do not succeed in Parliament, they have further resources in contemplation, and that they expect, at every renewal of their petition, an increase of friends without doors at least, to support their cause.

3dly, That it is continually suggested, that, though they were overpowered by numbers in the House of Commons, their arguments were evaded, not confuted; and that while these celebrated discourses remain unanswered, we may boast of our victory, but they were not defeated.

4thly, That it is possible the same subject may be introduced for discussion before a higher assembly; or, by a side wind, may again be drawn into debate in the lower house, under some other denomination.

And lastly, That the subject does not seem to be exhausted, the press being still open to productions

productions on both sides, old arguments revived, letters written, speeches published, meetings advertised, committees continued, the battle, so nobly won, in danger of being fought over again, and every inch of the ground contested.

These motives, with the advice of some friends, on whose partiality perhaps, more than their judgment, he may be said to rely, not the vanity to appear in print, and to defy criticism, have prevailed on the author not to suppress a production, which, if it exposes the fallacy and dangerous tendency of these Sermons, may perhaps be thought to do some service to our civil and religious establishment; and may have the effect to preserve, beyond the occasion of the moment, an antidote to the poison diffused by their dispersion.

EXAMINA-



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# EXAMINATION

OF

DR. PRICE's and DR. PRIESTLEY's

SERMONS\*.

**I**T will appear a bold undertaking, in a little obscure Rector of a country village, to enter the lists against such giants in literary fame, and controversial skill, as Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley; yet as every one, who submits his sentiments to the public, expects some notice to be taken of his pro-

\* The reader is requested to keep it in remembrance throughout, that this Examination was finished and intended for the press, though it was too late for publication, before the petition for the repeal was rejected in the House of Commons.

B

ductions,



ductions, either to commend, to doubt, or to combat his opinions, it will not be deemed any great presumption, it is hoped (for it is with the utmost diffidence of my own abilities, and with the highest deference to the great authorities I oppose, that I hazard these observations) if I consider freely and candidly some of the reasonings and assertions contained in these celebrated discourses; the first preached November 4th, 1789, at the meeting-house in the Old Jewry; the second before the congregations of the Old and New meetings at Birmingham, on the day following, in avowed defiance of the established superiority, and exclusive privileges of the Church of England.

In these then we may naturally expect, that, as the whole strength of the cause is professedly exerted, every thing which can be advanced in favour of the Dissenters is fully and advantageously exhibited. But if it can be shewn, that the first contains only common abstract truths, which no one will controvert in general, but as either diverted from their true end by partial applications, or disguised by prejudice, to serve the purpose of  
the

the occasion ; that, notwithstanding an ostentatious display of language, there is but little that calls for a reply ; that his positions are generally assuming, and often dangerous : if it can be proved, that the latter, though more temperate, and apparently more argumentative, is supported by many fallacies in reasoning, and conveys many suspicious insinuations and alarming menaces ; if, I say, it can be made clear to the satisfaction of the unprejudiced reader, that these invincible antagonists are yet vulnerable in some weak part, the force of their engines, formidable as they are represented, may effectually be resisted, and the pillars of the constitution remain unshaken.

It being commonly observed, that the merit of no work is fully appreciated, till some \* periodical critics have passed their definitive sentence upon it, and too many readers being cautious of deciding, till their minds are previously prepared with a judgment from which there is seldom an appeal ; I have waited with some impatience for these determinations, not to influence my own conclu-

\* Critical Review.

sions, but to see what impression they are likely to make on others. Of one of these discourses, namely that preached at the Old Jewry, there is a fair and explicit examination; to a great part of which, though I cannot concur with them on every point, I readily subscribe; but I must beg leave to add some observations, which seem to have escaped their critical acumen, or of which their plan is upon too confined a scale to give a full and detailed examination. The animadversions upon the other are so very concise and general, and the whole, except in one suspicious passage, pronounced in the gross unexceptionable, and that without any apparent examination, that they must excuse me, if I endeavour to recall their attention to some defects in argument, which they have overlooked, and to attack some assertions, which they think unassailable.

The first of these discourses begins with some obvious common-place observations upon the love of our country, which I shall not stay to consider, because they are too true to be contested; except that in excluding all attachment to the soil or spot of earth



which we inhabit, and confining us to “ that  
 “ body of companions, and friends, and kin-  
 “ dred, who are associated with us under the  
 “ same constitution of government,” he gives  
 only a partial representation of the case, and  
 seems desirous to divest us of those affections  
 which are inseparable from our nature: for  
 in fact the love of our country includes both  
 these kinds of attachment; and, endeavour  
 to divide them as far asunder as you will in  
 theory, they will still in practice be united;  
 and men will give a decided preference to  
 that portion of the earth, and to those scenes  
 to which from their infancy they have been  
 accustomed, and which they expect not to  
 find in another they have not seen, and of  
 which they can form no idea.

But the love of our country, in this au-  
 thor’s acceptation, is not to include any pre-  
 ference of its laws and constitution to those  
 of others: “ for there are few countries,” he  
 says, “ that enjoy the advantage of laws and  
 “ government which deserve to be preferred.”  
 Now it will be difficult, I apprehend, to say  
 in what the love of our country is to con-  
 sist, if it be neither in the love of the soil

and situation, nor in the attachment which we have acquired, whether justly or unjustly founded, to the particular system of laws under which we are governed. Whatever be the form of government, most nations prefer their own; and if, from comparing their situation with that of surrounding nations, they are persuaded that they enjoy advantages of which others are deprived, it naturally and necessarily enhances their affection to it. Even when they are convinced of some inconveniencies which they wish to remedy, and, in imitation of those who are more fortunately circumstanced, to form their constitution upon a more perfect model, they have still the same predilection for their own. How shall we account for this predilection? (and our author himself is aware that it is natural) but by allowing that local attachments, as well as habits and associations early acquired, together with a desire to promote the interests and importance of our own nation, contribute to make up the complex idea of the love of our country; and that in the reality of things these joint affections cannot be disunited.

When

When Dr. Price says, that the love of our country may be carried too far, if it leads to a contempt of all others, to a spirit of rivalry and contention, we admit the full force of his observation, and wish the benevolence which Christ recommended more universally diffused. But when we have the same authority for saying, that *it must needs be that offences come*, we are not so sanguine, we confess, as to expect that all national jealousy shall immediately subside, or that those countries, whose interests have been always supposed to clash, will as yet at least *love their brother as themselves*. His observation also, that our Saviour has not mentioned this duty, and his reasons for its omission in the catalogue of Christian virtues, are very just: I have only to remark that they are not new. —But all that the author advances in this general and abstract way, seems to have a latent design, and to be calculated chiefly as an apology for the preference which he every where betrays, and towards the conclusion of his discourse more pointedly, to foreign systems in disparagement of his own; though the superiority for which he is so zealous is



yet an unshapen embryo, and subject to the uncertainty of all untried experiments.

Truth, virtue, and liberty are blessings which no one will deny as objects worthy our attention. This too is one of those general axioms which we may safely admit, as being so true that no one will think them worth disputing; but which, when misapplied by prejudice to serve a particular purpose, may create dangerous delusions: since, from hints occasionally interspersed through this work, they appear to be thought exclusively the property of the Dissenters; and, as the Dr. observes in another place, and with another view, “we are too apt to confine wisdom and virtue within the circle of our own acquaintance and party.”

Of the writers of our country, who are supposed to have diffused useful knowledge on the rights of mankind, to have vanquished error, and to have established truth, none are selected but those whose principles are avowedly \* republican; all prejudiced against that

\* Milton, Sidney, Locke, and Hoadley. Among these writers of republican principles, I have no scruple to class  
Bishop

that constitution in church and state by which they were protected, and some of them openly engaged in a rebellion, which had nearly proved fatal to all our rights and liberties.

Virtue is the next great blessing and ornament, we readily admit, belonging to human nature, and we willingly subscribe to all this author's eulogium upon so necessary a quality in every state, as well as in every individual: but we are far from allowing the very partial cause which he assigns of the general neglect of this blessing, and which he ascribes "in a great measure to the defects and " absurdities in our established code of faith " and worship." It will be difficult to find any thing that was ever advanced in the heat of controversy more unguarded, or more unfounded than this assertion; and the proofs which he brings, that in Catholic countries the most thinking among the people are infidels, from seeing religion so deformed as it is there,

Bishop Hoadley, who, to ascend to the high station which he afterwards attained, condescended to pay court to the dissenters, who were thought to be useful to the minister at that time. " Could we get two or three more such men as Hoadley upon the bench, we would soon overturn the hierarchy," said a gentleman once in my hearing, who was well acquainted with that prelate, and was as forward for the repeal of the Test Act as any dissenter can be at this day.

will

will not be applicable to this ; unless it can be shewn, which is not true, that we have retained any of the absurdities of Popery, or, which is equally false, that the few ceremonies, which we did not abolish, must lead to vice and encourage immorality.

\* That the common people are falling into " that state of barbarism in religion " lately revived by Methodism, we have " every reason to deplore ;" but we are firmly persuaded that it is not owing to any defect or error in our religious code, or to a total negligence, as it is sometimes alledged (and perhaps it is not defensible in every particular instance) in our established clergy. But from all the observation we have been able to make, we are decidedly of opinion, that the doctrines of predestination, election, regeneration, &c. which are now taught in some of the newly-erected meeting-houses, and which were always the true Calvinistic

\* I have been informed, that in the third edition Dr. Price has omitted these reflections upon Methodism, but as this Examination refers to the second edition, the Dr. must excuse me if I cannot consent to his relinquishing that part, which is one of the few points in which the Author and his Examiner are agreed.

doctrines,



doctrines, have contributed more to introduce this barbarism, than any thing which they can have heard or seen in our church. Those doctrines which encourage men in sin that grace may abound; that make God a merciless tyrant, partial, unjust, and a respecter of persons, are inculcated by the Methodists: these Methodists have willingly joined the Dissenters, for the protection granted by the act of toleration; and these again are readily received by the Dissenters, for the benefit of their assistance, and the addition of numbers to support their cause: These are the doctrines which we think have opened an inlet to blasphemy and impiety; and it is to our credit, we apprehend, that we have endeavoured, however ineffectually, to stem the torrent.

We are equally mistaken, it seems, with respect to our ideas of liberty; for, though we imagined our own to be one of the freest constitutions upon earth, and founded upon the truest principles of liberty; though other nations look up to us with admiration, not unmixed with envy, and some are even now framing their constitution in imitation of ours, as the most perfect model of a free government

government (with some additional refinements, which future experience may not establish) yet we are in danger, as certain hints seem to suggest, of falling into the most abject slavery, "like the prostrate worshippers in Turkey of an idol of their own creating, or like the peasants, in their most deplorable state of humiliation, in Germany or Russia."

This gentleman and his associates may declaim as they please upon ideal liberty, which never was nor ever can be realized; but a system of liberty that has stood the test of experience, and been raised to its present state by a continued accession of improvements, that might almost be pronounced perfect, if any efforts of human wisdom were unmixed with frailty, is already provided for them; and they would find it more for their interest to remain contented with a plain and practicable code of laws, than to aim at a total reformation, in order to correct some occasional imperfections. The picture, therefore, which this author draws of slavery, actual or probable, in this country, is a picture without an original, a mere sketch of his own imagination, disguised by prejudice, and unapplicable

cable to the subject for which it was so partially designed.

Why we are accused of servile adulation, and even of idolatry, in our addresses to his Majesty upon his late recovery, it requires no great sagacity to comprehend. These addresses were certainly intended to express our gratitude to Heaven (and therefore perhaps the expressions were the more elevated) for its signal interposition in our favour, at a time beyond all others the most critical to these kingdoms; an interposition the more welcome as the less expected, eventually desirable to all, and a disappointment only to those who had been better satisfied, had it pleased the Almighty, in the fierceness of his anger, to turn our thanksgiving into mourning.

After the gross insult to the Sovereign, in the rude language of an address, which this author says he should have been inclined to present upon that occasion; after more than insinuating that "the first Magistrate may  
 " be deficient in personal qualities, and not  
 " equal to, or even far below many among  
 " ourselves," it is but a trifling compensation



tion to speak in general terms of the deference and homage due to the civil magistrate. What is intended by this author, in his idea of the civil magistrate, is clearly seen ; and that necessary distinction seems for ever disregarded by all republican writers, of the triple authority included in the British constitution, with peculiar and superior prerogatives annexed to sovereignty. But no unnecessary compliment was to be expected from this gentleman to the sovereign power, who is so ready to exalt, what, by a bold perversion of an appropriated term, was first adopted by some republican here, and received with high encomiums by the French patriots, *the Majesty of the People*, in opposition and superior to the Majesty of Kings.

After descanting fully upon these amiable qualities of truth, virtue, and liberty, and intimating plainly enough not to be misunderstood, that they are not frequently to be found in this celebrated land of science, of justice, and national freedom, the author shews that one of the best proofs we can give of love to our country, is to defend it against  
its

its enemies. In the necessity of this duty we willingly concur, and heartily join with him in deprecating that most dreadful affliction, an offensive, or defensive, war: and I wish the times would authorize me to hope, that the "nations of the earth would find out some better way of settling their disputes, and *beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.*" But the friendly intentions of our inveterate rivals are still to be suspected (though they at present are in such high favour with this gentleman) whenever they can be said to be at peace among themselves; and the frequent appearances of jealousy and national distrust, which they cannot help betraying upon every slight occasion, are an unequivocal proof how carefully we ought to be upon our guard, and what hereafter we are to expect from these professed enemies, though, for the purpose of the moment, pretended friends \*.

\* The works at Cherbourg, which were evidently intended for the purpose of annoyance, not of defence, if they are interrupted from a deficiency of resources only, and are, if practicable, to be resumed hereafter, speak very intelligibly without a comment.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving to God for his great mercies is unquestionably his due, as well for those more personal, and in one sense national ones, which we have of late experienced, as for those more general, to which we look back with veneration, as so many æras in our constitution, the Reformation, the Restoration, and the Revolution. Of these the last is not the least important; and for the blessings of this we have reason to be thankful equally with the Dissenters\*: nay, we flatter ourselves that we have a more adequate sense of the singular benefit of that great event, for we are perfectly satisfied with what was then effected for the security of our liberties, which the Dissenters avow-

\* It is asserted by the Dissenters, in many of their resolutions, and intimated by these preachers in their discourses, that the Revolution was principally effected by the Dissenters. I shall therefore beg leave to transcribe a passage from a well-written letter in the St. James's Chronicle (January 7th—9th): “ It is barely a century since the Dissenters  
 “ gave James the Second to understand, that they heartily  
 “ thanked him for his good intentions toward them, and their  
 “ suffering brethren the Papists, in his schemes of indul-  
 “ gence; and thus actually gave countenance to the pernicious projects of that monarch; while the Church of Eng-  
 “ land, by the vigorous stand which she made against his  
 “ declaration of indulgence, actually brought forward the  
 “ Revolution at that critical period, and saved this country  
 “ from ruin.”

edly



edly are not. The toleration then granted, and the indulgences since extended for the protection of their ministers, have hitherto been deemed sufficient; but the Dissenters complain that the Revolution was incomplete, and that the extension which they have since obtained is still defective, as it exposes them to penalties, and many unjust disqualifications. The Corporation and Test Acts, which were enacted some years before the Revolution, as some of the great bulwarks of our constitution, were not then abrogated, and while they continue in force, their indisputable right to a share of power is injuriously withheld from them.—That the great struggle is now for power in the state is beyond a question, not how much further toleration shall be extended (for that cannot well be carried much beyond its present limits, consistently with our own rights and liberties); but which shall form the established religion of this country, for in that it must terminate, the Episcopal Church of England, congenial with a limited monarchy, and a regular subordination in the state, or the Presbyterian Assemblies, under the influence of a Republic.

The Test and Corporation Acts are then the great obstacles to the Dissenters' hopes: they should therefore be considered as the Palladium of the British constitution, and be guarded with equal solemnity and religious veneration. But what guard, they say, is that which only deters the most conscientious, but which the profligate and the infidel may with the greatest facility evade?—It is the prerogative only of the great Judge of all to read the consciences of men. It is our concern only to see that certain conditions, to which, for the general safety, we have all submitted, be punctually fulfilled, and we are candidly to suppose that every man's motives are pure, till they are proved to be corrupt. That person who enters into so sacred an engagement as these Acts require, with a lie on his lips, or prevarication in his heart, not he who innocently, because ignorant of the communicant's motives, administers the form, is alone responsible.

Many undue reflections still continue to be thrown out, that we convert the most solemn act of our religion into a mere instrument

strument for obtaining civil offices, and that the Sacrament is prostituted to a purpose for which it was never intended by its great Founder.—The Legislature having an undoubted right to encourage the Christian in preference to all other religions, as well as to favour what particular sect it chuses of that religion, certainly means to incapacitate all who are not of the Church of England from executing offices of trust and power. The highest proof which we can give that we are of this Church, is receiving the Sacrament in conformity to the rites which she has ordained. The bare attendance on the common service of the Church, should that be proposed as a test, is not determinate enough to ascertain the fact, that we are of this communion, since any man may frequent the Church without joining in any one petition in it; but the elements of bread and wine being visible and tangible substances, must be openly received, or openly declined. Nor is it indeed receiving the Sacrament once only, and no more, but regularly and habitually, which in truth is expected as the test of a man's persuasion;



suasion; for the consciences of many might allow them a single act of indulgence, who would be staggered at the repeated participation of a rite, which constantly upbraids them *with lying to the Lord*. This therefore is the reason that receiving the Sacrament, according to the prescribed form, shall be a qualification for offices, because it is the fullest and most unequivocal proof that we are of that Church to which those offices are confined. But it is highly injurious to say, that a man is required to receive the Sacrament once only to prove him a member of this Church; because he is supposed to be at all times ready to give this proof by the habitual and constant practice of communicating. A formal proof of the participation indeed is not necessary to be produced in every given instance, and might be inconvenient; but the actual communicating within a definite time is indispensable; for were there no limitation, the receiving the Sacrament might be continually deferred, till it was never received, and infinite abuse might arise from the expedient of repeated indemnification.

Why

Why the Legislature exempted itself from the obligation of the Test laws, it becomes not us to decide too hastily; but if, as the same ingenious \* writer that I mentioned before observes, “ it be right that the Legislators themselves should be taken in-  
 “ differently out of the whole community,  
 “ and bound by as few obligations as possible, though it be necessary that those  
 “ only who approve of the constitution as  
 “ by law established, should be entrusted  
 “ with carrying the laws into execution ;” if this, I say, be the intention of the Legislature, we readily submit, that “ every description of men shall be equally favoured in  
 “ making laws, as far as is consistent with  
 “ the good of the country.”

But perhaps a more satisfactory solution of the question may be given upon this ground, that the Test was not annexed to representation, because the Dissenters who refused the Test would in that case have remained unrepresented; and, as it is one of the first principles of our constitution (and

\* St. James's Chronicle.

which was the cause of so much contention in the American war) that taxation must be the voluntary act of those who are to support the burdens of the state, those ought to be exempted who have not the power of opposing it by their representatives. This I apprehend to be now an approved maxim in politics, unless those who are not represented should uphold a foreign power with a controuling right over the magistracy of this kingdom; or unless they refuse to pledge themselves to their constituents, by the most solemn proof, after the Sacrament, which the laws allow, namely, an oath founded on the belief of the Christian religion. By the latter the Quakers and Jews are obliged to submit to certain disabilities, while they deny the validity of such oaths; and the former operates to the exclusion of Roman Catholics from a share in the Legislature, while they assert the supremacy of the Pope over all civil governors.

Should we admit therefore the propriety of that distinction, which exempts the legislative from those restrictions which bind  
the



the executive part of government, still however, if it should be found hereafter by experience to give too great a latitude, and those who are hostile to this constitution should be likely to preponderate in the Legislature, a proper security might perhaps be judged expedient to secure this opening; and the present, or some adequate test, might be adopted, to leave no room for exceptions, that may so insidiously be turned against ourselves.

The inequality of representation is the constant theme of patriotism, and has been so often repeated, like certain annual motions in the House of Commons, which are introduced of course, and of course rejected, that men begin to nauseate the subject, and the movers themselves to be ashamed of their own motions. But the different attempts that have been made, and the different modes that have been proposed, to new-model and arrange the general system, and rejected by every different projector in favour of his own, equally inadequate, clearly prove that the much-wished for equalizing plan is not yet discovered, how-

ever the Dissenters may flatter themselves that they are in possession of this infallible arcanum, which is to correct all irregularities.

This author very justly reprobates, and in the strongest terms, what however is no uncommon phenomenon, an immoral patriot. It will therefore but ill become him or his party to apply to those for support in this cause, who affect popularity without virtue; who, under the mask of zeal for their country, make a public prostitution of character, and are in fact the "*Gamblers, Atheists, and Libertines,*" to whom he before alluded, and to whom his audience, if report be credited, from the pointed emphasis of his delivery, unanimously made the application.

The author concludes his discourse with an ardent effusion of joy, that "Providence" has spared him to be a witness of these "glorious Revolutions" that have taken place, or are now forming among the nations. For this purpose, while the excellence of his own constitution is unreasonably undervalued, the advantages of foreign states are exaggerated, their numbers multiplied, their

their defects concealed, their resources magnified. It is his duty to undeceive the world, and to shew that France and America have the substance, while we are amusing ourselves with the mere shadow and pretence of liberty. And this is called Patriotism! this the direct tendency of a discourse, whose avowed design is to recommend the love of our country, by lessening it in its own estimation, and degrading it in the eyes of foreigners, by depreciating its credit, inviting hostilities, and declaring to the world how vulnerable and exposed we lie. If this representation be true, a real lover of his country would be the last to divulge it; if it be false, what does not that man deserve, who propagates a falsehood so pregnant with destruction \* ?

\* Dr. Price, in a long note, laments the want of the Minister's support, when their petition was presented the last year, and with a view of drawing some invidious comparisons, quotes the words of the late Lord Chatham, in a debate in the House of Lords in the year 1772; but whose sentiments are fairly deducible from a private letter to the Doctor himself, that it was an extended toleration only that he was contending for (and which the dissenting ministers afterwards obtained) not the establishment of the Presbytery upon



upon the ruins of Episcopacy. The words of Lord Chatham are, as quoted by Dr. Price from the Parliamentary Debates, and adopted by him in their full extent, "*We have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Arminian Clergy.*"

With the utmost deference to so high an authority, we may be permitted, we hope, without offence, to attempt a vindication of our Church from this weighty charge; and whoever will peruse without prejudice some Letters and Tracts of the present Dean of Gloucester, published in the years 1772 and 3, upon the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England, must be convinced, I should apprehend, that her doctrines are not Calvinistic; that the very offensive 17th Article, if the latter part of it, which is commonly overlooked, be taken into consideration, and both together compared with other Articles, the book of Homilies, and the whole tenor of our Liturgy, will not appear so formidable; and that the former part, which contains the rigid Calvinistic doctrines, is much softened, and in fact invalidated, by the latter; for whoever is convinced that Personal Election and Reprobation are not *expressly declared unto us in the word of God*, is not bound by the sense, which the Calvinists industriously affix to that article.

It is the Dean's opinion, that the English reformers, out of deference to the foreigners (Bucer and Martyr) who assisted in forming our Articles, and were certainly Predestinarians, consented to the insertion of the former part of this 17th Article; but took care to add the latter part, and the whole 16th, to obviate the supposition that they favoured Calvinism. However this be (and indeed it is highly probable) a part only of one Article, with the remainder of the same as a counterpoise in the opposite scale, weighs no more against other articles equally determinate, together with many of the Homilies which are referred to as explanatory of the Articles, and the whole book of Common Prayer, than  
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a single metaphysical argument, which puzzles more than it convinces, is of weight against positive demonstration, and decisive experiments in Natural Philosophy.

To the assertion, that our Liturgy is Popish, we are still less inclined to subscribe; unless it be a mark of Popery to retain some general prayers and thanksgivings, with a few indifferent forms, and a very simple part of the habit, and entirely to discard every other appendage of Popery. And in truth it may be observed, that a considerable part of our Liturgy, especially the Litany, part of which was read in the Church even so early as the fourth century, was used by the primitive Christians, long before the corruptions of Popery had tainted the pure doctrines of Christianity. The Liturgy, though in some degree still imperfect, is by the generality of Christians now judged to be more proper to be accompanied by the congregation, than the metaphysical extempore effusions of those who call themselves philosophical Christians.

As to the English Clergy being Arminian, we have only to remark, that the Reformation was completed in this country, and the chief of its doctrines established, not long after Edward the Sixth came to the throne, in 1547; and that Arminius began only to express his doubts about Predestination and Grace, as maintained by Calvin, in the year 1591, more than forty years after. It is, we conceive, no imputation on the Church of England, that her doctrines and those of Arminius should coincide upon certain points; but the dates here assigned would seem rather to prove, that Arminius might be indebted to the Church of England; or that both perhaps might derive their opinions from the same source; for the Augsburg confession, as drawn up by Melancthon, and the Paraphrase of the New Testament by Erasmus, the two most moderate among the Reformers, seem to be the models to which our Church referred for the sense in which it wished

to be understood, and which Arminius, with some variations, might afterwards adopt.

It will not be denied, that the English divines at the Synod of Dort did espouse the Arminian side of the question, against the Gomarists, or Calvinists; but this does not prove that Arminius was their first instructor, but that, being previously established in those opinions which the Church of England, as well as Arminius, had adopted, they had there an opportunity publicly to defend them. That conference indeed ended, as most other conferences do, in neither side being convinced by the arguments of their opponents, and in this case particularly the violence of their antagonists, and the partiality of the ruling powers to Calvinism, drove them from the assembly, and condemned them in their absence.



## E X A M I N A T I O N

O F

*Dr. PRIESTLEY's Sermon.*

TO attack a man who is armed at all points for controversy, whom even Reviewers seem afraid to encounter, and who will be prepared to parry every assault, or explain away every suspicious insinuation with which he may be charged, will be a more difficult and hazardous undertaking. Hazardous however as it is, with proper deference to the transcendent abilities of the great author, I venture upon the task, to detect what strikes me to be fallacious in reasoning, as well as to obviate what may appear dangerous in its tendency, and alarming in its consequences; convinced that the cause, however feebly defended, is of the first importance, and with which the dearest interests of this country are essentially connected.

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This discourse, it is true, is not set off with that glare of language and animated declamation which the other assumes, but is calm, sober, and unaffected, enters dispassionately upon the subject, and professes only to point out that propriety of conduct which the Dissenters are to observe, and which may ensure success to their application for relief.

The author allows, that “ they are already  
 “ indulged with a degree of toleration un-  
 “ known to their ancestors ; that this tole-  
 “ ration has been extended by the liberality  
 “ of the present age, and that they are suf-  
 “ ficiently protected in their persons, and  
 “ places of divine worship.” A question then obviously arises in this place, Why are they not satisfied ? “ Because,” he says, “ many of their brethren are still liable to  
 “ heavy confiscations and penalties, if the  
 “ laws were duly executed.”—To cut off all pretence that they were indebted for protection to connivance only, this toleration was extended, and we have not the slightest objection to give them every reasonable security, not amounting to a repeal of those laws

laws which are to secure ourselves : of this security we are inclined to think them already in possession ; but we hope the Legislature will take care not to confound encouragement with toleration.

Before I proceed to shew the fallacy of this author's reasoning, I must beg the reader's attention to some expressions that seem to imply *more than meets the ear*. When I read, that the Dissenters were " fully entitled " to the relief they sued for, *and even to more than they have yet solicited,*" the suggestion, I protest, startled me ; and it is noticed by the Reviewers as exceptionable, nay the " only suspicious and exceptionable passage " in a discourse, as far as it goes, unanswerable." This, if I mistake not, his brethren the Dissenters will not thank him for discovering so soon ; for it is clearly their interest to confine themselves at present to the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts ; and when this principal outwork is carried, and the post properly secured, to make their further advances gradually and patiently : but to disclose too much of the plan so early is rather impolitic in so great a general ; as  
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It puts the besieged more upon their guard, and makes them less inclined to listen to terms of accommodation, for fear of any latent advantage that may be taken of their concessions.

But what more is it that this gentleman alludes to? The immediate object of their petition is a participation of civil offices only. They disavow any intention at present of aiming at the emoluments of the Church. What is there then further in reserve? If it be a democracy, with a nominal King, as it is at present in some countries abroad, or a government without a head, together with the abolition of all orders and distinctions, let them have the openness to confess it; but unless they will speak out more freely what it is that they are entitled to, these distant insinuations leave us in the dark to suspect the worst, and raise greater alarms than the most explicit declarations.

This author had asserted before, and he repeats it too frequently not to be attended to, that all Dissenters are liable to penalties, because they are still subject to disabilities and disqualifications. The fallacy of this  
assertion

assertion is observable, in thus artfully confounding penalty with disqualification. In the common acceptation of the word, a penalty is a punishment inflicted by some person lawfully empowered, for an offence against a positive law : but disqualifications, to which a man subjects himself, are not punishments ; because it is in every man's power, which it is not in the other case, where the law has been actually transgressed, to avoid them. Before any toleration was granted, Dissenters were not only liable to penalties and forfeitures, but have frequently suffered the punishment for infringing the laws that were then established. And so far the punishment was just, though the law might be oppressive. But a lawgiver has certainly a right to impose what conditions he pleases on the subject, for his enjoyment of any particular privilege. If your conscience will not permit you to comply with the conditions, and you are thereby disqualified from partaking of that privilege, or any advantage arising from it, it is you, and not the law, that have created the disability, and have in fact disqualified yourself. What

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this author therefore says, immediately subsequent to this, that it is unjust to subject them to a penalty, unless it can be shewn that they are guilty of some offence, is clearly of no weight, for voluntary disability is upon this ground no penalty.

One great grievance of which the Dissenters complain is, that they are punished for conscience-sake. But, as they do not in general pretend that our terms of communion are sinful, a question has frequently been asked, if they ought not to submit their private opinion, which kind of worship is more calculated for edification, to the peace of the community; and, as far as I understand the question, no satisfactory answer has yet been given. But when these gentlemen plead so strongly for liberty of conscience, and expect to be believed that they are governed by the dictates of conscience, they should at least have so much candour and charity, as to suppose that the members of the established religion may be directed by the same rule, in doing what they know, or are persuaded, to be their duty.

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The great abilities and *energy of mind* of many among the Dissenters, have never been denied, and that they are capable of executing any office of trust and power equally with those who now enjoy them, will not be disputed. But the question here recurs ; Has the society a right of enacting laws for its own internal regulation, and of insisting on conditions with its members, as a security that the offices they accept shall be duly executed ? They well know that it unquestionably has such right ; for no society could exist without it. To say, therefore, that an exclusion from offices which they are capable of executing is unjust, is a fallacy not less evident than the former ; for it is assuming the question which ought to have been proved, namely, their right to employments, without the qualifications required by law.

But when the Dissenters speak of the deep *reflection and energy of mind and character*, which some of themselves possess, and which we should readily allow without their claim, it is too plainly insinuated, that these qualities are exclusive, that the members of the Established Church, in the undisturbed

turbed possession of power and emolument, have no occasion for exertion, and must submit, not only in Scripture learning, but in science also, to their more diligent and active opponents. If this contest should call forth the unexerted powers of the established clergy, we are obliged to the Dissenters for rousing us from our supineness; and if the bulwarks of our constitution should receive an additional support from the event of this struggle, we may thank our antagonists for giving us this opportunity to view the foundations, and we hope effectually to secure them.

“ That the civil magistrate has no concern with religious opinions,” is a favourite doctrine with all of this persuasion; but it is, if I mistake not, another fallacy; for it is only in part true. That every man has a right to worship his God in secret, in what manner he thinks it would be best accepted, is most true; true also, that the magistrate has no authority to interfere with his private sentiments, however erroneous, or to fix fetters upon his conscience: but when these private, and oftentimes singular, opinions are made public, and have the effect to disparage  
and

and revile the appointed worship of their country, to destroy our charity, and to disturb the peace of the community, they then call for the interference of the magistrate, to regulate the public exercise of religion, and to support, where it may be inefficacious of itself, the discipline and authority of the church \*.

\* Dr. Price, in an Appendix to his Sermon, has given us the *Declaration of Rights* by the National Assembly of France; and, though he holds them up as a model to all nations, and as it were the Magna Charta of the French government, yet, where they appear to militate against his own system, he can readily find arguments to prove them, in these particulars, objectionable. The tenth article says, “No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even of his religious opinions, *provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by law.*” This clearly concurring with the distinction above adopted, does not fully meet the Doctor’s wishes (and the eleventh is liable, in some degree, he says, to the same objection) “For it is obvious, that in every country, writing against its established doctrines is a disturbance of the public order established by law: and therefore, according to this article, punishable.” But in the estimation of those who are no incompetent judges, and who do not approve of all the excesses of French patriotism, this article, with its restrictions, is perfectly consistent with a just toleration, and built upon the broadest principles that can be admissible in a government controuled by law.



The imperfections that are continually and invidiously objected to our liturgy, have been considered in the examination of the former Discourse: but the harsh expressions in the Athanasian Creed, which are deservedly obnoxious, not only to Dissenters, but to many moderate men of the Established Church, we do not take upon us implicitly to defend; and we perfectly agree with the candid and liberal Dean of Gloucester, that “as the Nicene Creed maintains the same doctrine as strongly, though not so scholastically as the Athanasian, the latter is really superfluous in our present service.” What further regulations in our established formulary the legislature, in its wisdom, might adopt, we should think it our duty to promote; but we would not extort them by violence, nor press them intemperately by indecent perseverance.

As to “the continuance of the Test Act being a peculiar injustice to the Dissenters, because it was not originally intended to affect them, but the Roman Catholics only,” I shall take the liberty to refer

them to the words of the learned Judge Blackstone upon this subject, who professedly says, that the two bulwarks of our church against Dissenters of all descriptions, are the Corporation and Test Acts ; and in their intention and application he makes no discrimination between them. “ In order,” he says, “ the better to secure the Established Church against perils from Non-conformists of all denominations, Infidels, Turks, Jews, Heretics, Papists, and *Sectaries*, there are two bulwarks erected, called the Corporation and Test Acts.” What the requisitions are in those Acts, which he proceeds to describe, are known to most men, and need not detain us. The decision of this question may indeed be left to the arbitration of the Dissenters themselves ; for, allowing that the Test Act was principally directed against the intrigues of the Papists, would the Dissenters be satisfied with the repeal of that alone, and suffer the Corporation Act to continue in force against them ? That was “ professedly levelled,” as Lord North observed in his celebrated speech upon this question, “ against

“ certain Dissenters, who in those days were  
 “ considered as rather unfriendly to the go-  
 “ vernment and constitution of the land.”

Would they now wish to be excluded from the privileges of corporate societies, any more than from civil and military employments ? It is clear they would not ; and they therefore now pray for the repeal of both. This our ancestors were aware of, and, seeing that the Test Act was also an effectual barrier as well against other Nonconformists as against the Catholics, considered both these Acts united as the joint security of our civil and religious liberties, and wisely resisted all attempts to separate or revoke them.

Some of the principal objections which have been made to the petition of the Dissenters, this author proceeds to controvert ; combating, first, that “ idea as imaginary, “ that the repeal of these Acts would be a “ violation of the constitution ; for if this “ complaint,” he says, “ be justly founded, “ the constitution is violated every sessions “ of parliament ; for there is no sessions in “ which there is not an instance of some “ repeal of old laws, or of enacting new  
 “ ones.”



“ ones.” We hear, indeed, frequently, of the repeal of some revenue laws, of the tax upon cyder, the shop tax, and many others that are unnecessary or obsolete ; but, do we ever hear of a proposal for the repeal of the articles of Magna Charta, the Habeas Corpus Act, or the Acts for the establishment and security of the Protestant religion ? There was, it is true, a memorable repeal, some years since, of a statute, permitting an extension of certain privileges in favour of the Jews ; and upon this, among other well-weighed considerations, that if this indulgence were extended to the Jews, a further extension of favour could not be withheld from the petition of the Dissenters ; and therefore the same reason is equally valid at this time, that if this latitude which they request is granted to the Dissenters, it cannot with any colour of justice be refused the Jews.

Indeed this author, in another part of his discourse, says openly, that “ men of all denominations, Catholics and Protestants, Calvinists and Arminians, Trinitarians, Arians, or Unitarians, are all equally entitled to the same indulgence, to all the  
“ natural

“ natural and just rights of men and Englishmen.” How it is possible, that, in a country professing the religion of Christ, and claiming no privilege from any Christian society but as his followers, those who deny him to be the Saviour of mankind, the Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians, as well as Jews and Turks, who ought not to have been excluded, shall assemble together with Christians, to promote the same salutary ends of government (with which the Christian religion is intimately connected) without defeating or obstructing each other’s intentions, I confess is more than I can comprehend; and this gentleman has not condescended to shew us the result of such a happy union of contradictions and inconsistencies \*. But on this broad

\* It gives me great concern to dissent from so liberal a writer as Mr. Paley, whose arguments are always ingenious, and usually conclusive; but whose reasonings upon the expediency of a *complete toleration* do not appear to me perfectly satisfactory. In answer to the common objection, that the discordancy of religions is enough to render men unfit to act together in public stations; “ I perceive no reason,” he says, “ why men of different religious persuasions may not sit up-  
 “ on the same bench, deliberate in the same council, or fight  
 “ in the same ranks, as well as men of various or opposite  
 “ opinions upon any controverted topic of natural philosophy, history, or ethics.” That a concurrence in religious sentiments

broad basis I should suppose he would find very few, even of his own fraternity, to concur with him ; and I fear the author will be left without a second upon this question, and be reduced to that kind of fallacy in argument, which the logicians mean when they say, *Qui nimis probat, nihil probat*.

A second summary reply he makes to our imaginary apprehensions of danger, is, that “ if our church cannot stand but on the ruins “ of justice, it ought to fall.” With submission, it ought first to be proved that its

sentiments is necessary to enable men to fight in the same ranks, will hardly be affirmed ; for so long as they continue friendly to the state that employs them, it is of little moment how many different sects they may consist of : though, at the same time, some security to the state is required from their leaders, that they will so continue. But I think I can perceive a very material distinction between men of different persuasions meeting to discuss an abstract question in science, and men of opposite opinions sitting on the same bench, to deliberate and to decide upon subjects, which involve the religious as well as civil interests of mankind. In one case, the discussion may be conducive to no moral purpose whatever, and their religious creed may have no influence upon their determinations ; but in the other, contrary sentiments in religion may produce the most serious effects, if they should be supposed to give a bias to the deliberations, or the decisions should take a tincture (a case not impossible) from the different opinions which the judges had imbibed.

pretensions



pretensions are founded in injustice ; and those proofs, we think, are not yet produced. A general mistake, indeed, prevails among all who write or speak on that side of the question, as if our apprehensions were only raised by the exploded cry, *that the church is in danger* ; but our alarm is not for the church only, but for the constitution, as consisting of the church and state united : for the clergy are no more concerned in the issue of this great question than the laity, as it is against the religious and civil establishment jointly that the attack is professedly directed ; and upon this ground we do not barely suspect danger to the church of England as part of the state, but a deep-laid design to endeavour to subvert it ; and the instances which this writer enumerates to silence our apprehensions, by shewing us that tests may be removed without danger to the foundations, have not yet produced that effect, nor do we conceive them sufficient to justify any relaxation of our vigilance.

In arbitrary, I may almost say military governments, such as Russia and Prussia, the eye of the sovereign can overlook the whole, even to the remotest extremities ; and  
more

more particularly so, where the territories, as in the latter of these instances, are of no great extent: there, perhaps, no test may be necessary, where all innovations may immediately be suppressed, and every danger which the growing interest of any new sect might create, may be crushed as it arises; “but  
 “in a very extensive and free state, such as  
 “ours is,” says the same author\*, whose sentiments I willingly adopt, “the constitution of which has gradually and slowly  
 “arisen from the combined influence of  
 “reason, of accident, of necessity, and experiment; in which the church itself is a  
 “member of the constitution; in which no  
 “change can be effected without important consequences; and in which any ill  
 “effects can be obviated or corrected, not  
 “by the sudden efforts of one man, but by  
 “the slower operation of King, Lords, and  
 “Commons conjointly: in such a state  
 “as this, a test of the assent of every one  
 “employed in the executive department, to  
 “the entire constitution of the country, becomes absolutely necessary.”

\* St. James's Chronicle.

What is remarked of the freedom from tests in Holland, I apprehend labours under the same degree of fallacy with many others before noticed; that is, a part of the case is stated fairly, and a part of it is concealed. For though in the military department, where, having but few troops of their own for their internal defence, they are necessarily obliged to enlist those of all nations, their army may include officers and soldiers of all descriptions and persuasions; yet in the civil establishment it will be found, I apprehend, that the Grand Pensionaries, the Greffiers, and the Burgomasters are universally, and by the direction of their laws, of the established religion of their country\*.

I had flattered myself that no one would yet produce France, or even America, as instances of a permanent establishment.—That no barrier may yet be requisite in those countries, where unlimited unqualified toleration is at present held out to all the world, it would puzzle the deepest speculators to determine; and the solitary example of one prime minister, in times of the utmost distraction and perplexity, being of a different

\* Swift on the Test Act.

persuasion



persuasion from the established religion, unfortunately proves too little, as his former comprehensive position proved too much.

But they say there is no Test in Scotland. I could wish to be informed, how long it is since the difficulties, under which the Episcopal Church of Scotland laboured, have been redressed; and whether it was before the toleration had been extended to the dissenting ministers here, that the Kirk had ceased to persecute the Church. But however this be determined, the English Government has been so cautious of interfering with the Scotch, that they have been desirous of leaving them in these matters to their own discretion, and with the utmost propriety and delicacy have hitherto considered the act of Union, as indeed the Scotch do themselves, as a kind of *noli me tangere*.

“The Test Act has been repealed in Ireland;”  
 granted: but I cannot help thinking this author guilty of another fallacy, when he asserts, “That the danger to the Establish-  
 “ed Church was to appearance much great-  
 “er there than it can be in this country;  
 “since the Dissenters in Ireland are *perhaps*  
 “more

“ more in number than the members of the “ Church of England.” The word *perhaps*, in some measure qualifies his assertion; but if the fact be not true, it destroys his argument. Under the description of Dissenters, I suspect that he must, to serve his purpose, include the Roman Catholics, as it is commonly supposed that the Dissenters, properly so called, bear but a small proportion to the members of the Episcopal Church; and the gentleman himself, whatever use he might wish to make of their junction on this occasion, will hardly allow the Catholics to come under the denomination of Presbyterians, Anabaptists, or Independents.

That the Dissenters here, without including the Roman Catholics, are inconsiderable, is not fairly stated; their numbers, we know, are continually increasing, proselytes are obtained by every artifice and importunity; and the coalition of every different sect of Methodists, Moravians, the disciples of Whitefield or Wesley, the saints, the elected, and regenerated, with the Dissenters, to enjoy the benefit of the toleration, and propagate their tenets among the vulgar without molestation, creates, we think, no imaginary alarm;  
and

and there is generally a flying Squadron, who, as Dr. Priestley says in another place, ought properly to be classed with neither party, but who will always attach themselves to power, as power, on the other hand, will naturally adhere to numbers.

It is true, as this author goes on to observe, “ that the actual introduction into offices of trust and power, will not necessarily follow the repeal:” the greater number will outweigh the less, and we have always the remedy in our own hands. This may in general be true ; but the disqualifications once removed, the same *energy and perseverance* that procured the repeal, would still be exerted to secure the footing they had once obtained, and they may safely be trusted to lose no advantage which our supineness may have betrayed to them. Were the Dissenters suffered to carry this point, every danger which we have foreseen will succeed of course; like what was observed of a certain person, who could introduce himself where there was the least opening, that if he could but once get his foot in, he would contrive that the whole *body*, should follow.

In this great contest to obtain the repeal,  
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they



they must expect, he says, to encounter the most stubborn prejudices, which require time and perseverance to subdue. Inflexibility of attention to one object, the exertion of all their combined forces at one instant, and a determination to resist all denials, must be repeatedly and continually adopted, and in the end must be effectual. And this example is not unworthy of our imitation ; for, if they expect to succeed only by perseverance and acting in one body, it shews us, that our hopes of defeating their views must rest upon our union, and determining our resistance to one point. But if no degree of evidence will convince those who are grown old in prejudice, and hardened in inveterate habits of thinking for themselves, lo ! we appeal, he cries, to those of a more ingenuous and teachable disposition : in other words, we direct our attacks upon the young and unwary ; those who have had no opportunity of searching to the bottom of the question, are easily misled by plausible insinuations, and open to every impresson, which superior knowledge, deeper artifice, and a longer experience in the ways of men, may make upon unguarded minds.

“ This

“ This is not a business,” says Dr. Priestley, “ that will justify our having recourse to arms, if there was any prospect of succeeding that way.” I would willingly give them credit, that they have no such resource in contemplation; “ because,” as the Doctor observes, “ it may do more harm than good.” But why is even the idea intimated, unless some distant hint is meant to be conveyed by it, that, as the friends of liberty in other countries have appealed so successfully to this expedient, the *ratio ultima* is still in reserve, and suspended over us by a slender thread? And it is more particularly alarming, “ as there appear some hopes,” he says, “ out of parliament, if not in it, “ and more friends are continually increasing upon every fresh hearing their petition.” Now, what effectual assistance can be expected from the people without doors, but in a general tumult and confusion? and, when the popular fury is once raised, who can say in what the disturbances shall terminate? But the author is in sentiment with us, that the experiment would be hazardous; for this reason, therefore, it should not even have been suggested.

The charge of intolerance and persecution

comes with an ill grace against the Church of England, whose pride is moderation, and who allows the most enlarged toleration, consistent with civil liberty, of any church; the modern refinements of visionary systems being as yet too unripe to form an exception. And therefore this author's possible effects of a principle extended as far as it will admit are mere suppositions, which he is well assured cannot be realized in this country, and require no answer. There is one exception indeed, with respect to an opening before observed, that if ever the legislature should apprehend "the right of being elected" not sufficiently guarded, it may be judged no impolitic step to strengthen and enlarge the barrier on that side.

As this author is desirous of removing all disabilities, even to the eligibility of the poor negroes, and allowing them the rights of men and citizens, I would take the liberty to ask him, if he is inclined seriously and *bonâ fide* to elect one of these emancipated Africans to serve in parliament, or would exalt him to the envied offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer, or Lord High Chancellor of England? And yet, upon his own principles of a broad and comprehensive admission of all parties,



ties, he would be guilty of great injustice, if he opposed the poor Negro's pretensions, or hindered his election.

Before I conclude, I would beg leave to observe one obvious fallacy in this gentleman, and most others of his brethren, in confounding *natural* with *social* rights. If by natural rights they mean those which every man claims in a state of nature, they would hardly wish, I should presume, to have recourse to those again: and whatever social rights they are entitled to must be subject to those conditions, limitations, and restrictions which every society must impose upon its members, or it must be soon dissolved.

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HAVING now finished what I proposed to myself in the examination of these celebrated Discourses, I leave it to the judgment of the public to determine how far I have succeeded. If I have not effected what I have undertaken, I shall be contented to have it said, that it is not to be ascribed to any defect in the cause I have attempted to support; but to a defect solely in the execution, if I have failed in detecting the false patriotism contained in one, the fallacies of

the other, and the dangerous tendency of both, I profess myself a zealous admirer of the splendid abilities of each of my antagonists, as well as partial to the private virtues of many of the Dissenters; but, however favourable be my opinion of them individually, my attachment to what I am persuaded to be a just cause, is too great to be sacrificed to personal partiality.—I am not hackneyed in the ways of disputation, and would willingly avoid all controversial politics, as I would polemical divinity. Whether these great writers think me too insignificant to be noticed, or forward enough to deserve chastisement, their silence in the one case will not mortify my pride, nor shall the severity of their reply provoke my petulance, to continue the dispute by asperity and ill manners. This privilege however I reserve to myself, that if the cause requires so feeble an advocate, or the notice they may take of me demands a compliment in return, I mean not to preclude myself from any fair opportunity to resume the question, or to vindicate my own Examination.

POST-

## P O S T S C R I P T.

**A**N anonymous Address to the opposers of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts having been put into my hands, the reader will, I hope, indulge me in some strictures upon it, as a kind of corollary to the preceding Examination ; in which many of its assertions having, I flatter myself, been answered by anticipation, a longer detail will, on that account, become unnecessary. The Address is written in a very animated stile ; but, as the author did not allow himself time to cool, with great intemperance, and soreness from disappointment, with extreme want of candour, and, in many particulars, with no small degree of arrogance.

The author, after a little strain of irony, to which figure he seems very partial, begins with endeavouring to remove that false alarm, which he says has been raised



throughout the kingdom, that “ the right “ of eligibility implies the right to offices.” That this conclusion does not immediately follow from the premises we readily admit; but what has been said in the Examination of Dr. Priestley’s Sermon, may be applicable here: inflexible perseverance to attain the office it aspires to, will not easily be satisfied with the power, without the use; and it is well known, that concessions only invite encroachments.

The great ferment which has been raised in the nation, is attributed to the opposers of the repeal: with what truth, we appeal to those stubborn things called dates and facts; and we challenge every sectary for an unreserved answer to this question; From which side did all this stir and movement, as this author calls it, originate? Were not committees held in London, meetings summoned in the country, delegates appointed, associations entered into, resolutions formed, menaces held out to representatives, and even *tests* proposed to all who expected their concurrence, long before the members of the established church were called upon to exert themselves, or thought

thought it of importance to resist their progress? The alarm was at first taken, not from that exploded apprehension that the Church, as this author and others have insinuated, but that the Constitution was in danger; and this not from the power, but from the restless activity of their opponents. This author is too well informed not to know, that the United States were once threatened with destruction, as much by an insignificant animal undermining their dikes, as they are at all times by "the impetuous sea breaking in upon them, and  
"overwhelming their land."

The advocates, equally with the antagonists of this gentleman, are obliged to him for his compliments, which are clearly not involuntary; and gratitude for the most brilliant exertions in a cause which was not successful, because it was not defensible, is not to be numbered in the catalogue of this Dissenter's virtues.

The flourishes upon *Toleration* are a mere perversion of language. The word, as appropriated to a religious sense, is in general well understood; but this author has so twisted and tortured it from its true meaning,

ing, that the Church and the Meeting-house seem to have changed sides, and the Dissenters are kind enough now to tolerate us, who had fondly conceived that we were tolerating them. Had this gentleman consulted Johnson's Dictionary, that would have explained the word to our mutual satisfaction; namely, that it is "*an allowance given to that which is not approved;*" and the quotation produced from Swift, under the word *tolerate*, might well nigh be decisive of the dispute; "*we are fully convinced, that we shall always tolerate them, but not that they will tolerate us.*"

This author's sneers upon all the members indiscriminately of the established church, and upon the clergy in particular, who disclaimed all concurrence in a petition to which they were insidiously invited, are exceedingly illiberal, and prove sufficiently, that should we allow him and his party to act upon conscientious principles, he has himself too little charity to allow that plea in others \*.

After

\* The stale sarcasm against the church, That she reaps where she did not sow, or, as this author chuses to misapply a passage



After these sneers, introduced as it were by a side glance, at the church, the author reverts to those out of it, who gave so effectual a check to their petition; and what he there asserts of the superior learning, superior discipline, and superior morality of their rising seminaries; the distinguished eminence of their writers, their preachers, their meetings, and every thing which is peculiarly their own, is so very assuming, so self-important, not to say so insolent, that even admitting it to be true, modesty also will hardly be classed among the virtues of this Dissenter.—Blush, ye boasted nurseries of Eton and Westminster, that you are not able to bring forward one man of learning and science, equal to what the improving seminaries of Northampton and of Hackney are continually sending into the world: and you, ye able and celebrated Professors of Cambridge and Oxford, for “ ever bow, in classic or philo-

a passage in Scripture, to render it more invidious, that *she gathers into barns, though she neither sows nor reaps*, but ill becomes those, the avowed object of whose petition is to be admissible to offices; unless we are to understand, that, though our clergy are so mercenary, their services shall be gratuitous.

“ sophic

“sophic knowledge, to an Entick or a  
“Kippis\*.”

The kind intimations that they shall be quick-sighted to encroachments and abuses of all kinds, may be of some use to us: we shall be ever indebted to their watchfulness, and may profit by their attention.

This gentleman speaks of some of his fraternity being in danger “from the general contagion of fashionable manners, a  
“contagion,” he says, “more noxious  
“than that which on the plains of Cher-  
“son swept from the earth the martyr of  
“humanity†.” That some may be already infected, and more may be hereafter, by this pestilential air, we must give this author credit for his assertions; and perhaps some portion of that universal taint might be no injury, which would gradually assimilate them to the rest of mankind.

For

\* Dr. Kippis's Letter to the Dean of Gloucester, “mutatis mutandis.”

† I gladly embrace the opportunity which this writer affords me, of doing justice to the memory of that singularly good man (and he was a dissenter) who fell a sacrifice

For an effectual reply to what this author advances about “weak places in our system,” “which shrink at investigation,” or about “doctrines embraced not in the simple and obvious sense,” what has been said in the Note at the conclusion of the first Sermon, will, it is hoped, with all candid judges, be deemed sufficient. This we profess to be our creed, and this we are persuaded to be the plain and literal sense in which the doctrines contained in our formularies, not made contradictory to themselves, to Scripture, and common sense, but rendered perfectly consistent and reconciled to each other, were intended to be received. *Quod si in hoc erro, lubenter erro; nec mihi hunc*

to the impulse which he felt of diffusing his benevolence on the borders of the Euxine. I know that his efforts were directed to the relief of the captive and the oppressed; I trust that the friend of man is receiving his reward in heaven: But let it be permitted me to ask his most sanguine admirers, those who were so forward to raise statues to him when living, Where is the man who will tread in his footsteps to the unwholesome dungeon, or be familiar with the pestilence, and yet hope to escape uncontaminated? Few there are that will be induced to imitate, however they may admire, such rare examples; few there were among the cautious part of mankind, who did not “prophetically forethink his fall.”

*errorem,*



*errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.*

To this boasting intimidation, that what we refuse to-day, the times will compel us to grant to-morrow, we have this short reply; The event only will justify the truth of all predictions.

The minds of men, we confess, are in a high artificial ferment; and, to adopt the laboured illustration of this author, “like the seas within the polar circle at the approach of spring,” seem impatient and struggling for some great event; of which they can no more foresee the consequences, than those mountains of ice which suffer such convulsions. But let it be remembered, that it is the part of discretion to keep clear from the concussion of those approaching fragments, and that we may well be contented to be safe in a temperate climate, and more quiet seas.

To every thing which this writer advances, in such glowing colours, of the present and future prosperity of France, “liberated from her chains and dungeons,” we have briefly to remark, that the completion of these things is not yet seen. But  
this

this gentleman will indulge me, I hope, in asking him this question ; “ If the established church of England is in such danger, when its truth ceases to be acknowledged, or when its doctrines will not stand the test of argument and reason,” what will he say for the national church of France, which, notwithstanding the various refinements in their civil code, is still continued with all its corruptions ? These must wither at the touch of free enquiry, and these, which he so much abhors in our church, upon his own principles he cannot surely approve in theirs. The suppression of monasteries, though it may lead to it there, as it did with us, is not the abolition of Popery ; this, let it not be forgotten, is, by the National Assembly, in concurrence with their King, established as the national religion by an ordinance for ever ; and the great question, Whether any religion but the Romish shall be tolerated in that enlightened country, “ even towards the close of the eighteenth century,” is not yet decided.

If this author would condescend to write with a little more temper, his observations

servations might have more weight: his abilities certainly command respect; his conceptions are strong, and his language, in general, elegant and nervous. I could only wish that his sentiments were more moderate, and his charity less confined.

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*Note.*—Since the above was at the press, the author hears, with infinite surprize, not unmixed with concern, that the Address to the Opposers of the Repeal is from a female pen!

And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?



F I N I S.

May 18  
1790.



